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Tent Tracts. No. 10.

"THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH."

BY ELD. D. M. CANRIGHT.

WE do not use the term "Christian Sabbath" because it is a correct or scriptural term, but to call attention to what we will show to be a grave error.

In the beginning, God created the earth in six days, and rested on the seventh. Gen. 2:1–3. Therefore he hallowed the seventh day, and called it "the Sabbath of the Lord." Ex. 20:8–11.

For over four thousand years this day was sacredly observed by the people of God. When we ask Christians why they do not still observe the seventh-day Sabbath, they reply that that is the Jewish Sabbath. They keep the "Christian Sabbath,"—the first day of the week. They claim that in the New Testament the Sabbath was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, so that the first day is the New-Testament, or "Christian Sabbath." This we squarely deny, and offer proof. If such a change was made, it was a very important one, and should be plainly recorded.

The seventh day was God's rest day, hallowed from creation, embodied in the moral law, and kept by the patriarchs and prophets for thousands of years. If this is to be set aside and become a working day and the first day is to become a holy Sabbath in its stead, so that it is a sin against God to work upon it, such a change would be very important, and should be plainly stated in the Scriptures.

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We have a plain statement in the New Testament to that effect whenever any of the rites or institutions of the Old Testament were done away. Was circumcision abolished? Yes, and here is the proof: "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." Gal. 5:2. But where is it said that the Sabbath is not to be observed?

Again, was the Levitical priesthood abolished? Yes, and here is the text: "For the priesthood being changed." Heb. 7:12. That settles that question. But where is it said that the Sabbath was changed?

Again, the sacrifices of the old dispensation were abolished when Christ died. This is plainly declared in Heb. 10:1–10. "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." Verse 9. But where is it said that the Lord took away the first Sabbath and established the second? But do we not keep the first day to commemorate the resurrection of Christ? No, the Lord never said that we should do so. The Lord's supper commemorates his death, 1 Cor. 11:23–26, and baptism commemorates his burial and resurrection. Rom. 6:3–5. We invite the reader to consider the following facts:—

The New Testament was written by Christians, in the Christian dispensation, for Christians. It was written by inspiration; hence, it uses Christian language, and tells us what Christians did. Every word of it was written years after the resurrection of Christ. Now let us see what these Christian scriptures say upon the Sabbath question.

The Son of God himself lived upon our earth over thirty years. He worked with his father as a carpenter. He labored six days in a week, and rested upon the Sabbath. "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read." Luke 4:16. Returning to the place of his nativity, it is particularly mentioned that he still observed the Sabbath according to his former custom. We have, then, the example of God's own Son for keeping the seventh-day Sabbath.

When questioned on this subject of the Sabbath, he said, "The Sabbath was made for man." Mark 2:27. And the book of Genesis tells us just when and how, God made the Sabbath for man. If it was made for man, it is because man needed it. Next, Christ says of himself, "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Verse 28. Which day is this? The seventh, as all know. This, then, is the Lord's day,—the day of which he is Lord.

In Matt. 12:1–12, the Pharisees accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath because he disregarded their silly regulations concerning it. He simply taught his disciples to eat upon the Sabbath when they were hungry. Jesus defended what he had done by referring to the example of David and the priests as recorded in the Old Testament, and concluded by saying, "Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days." Verse 12. Thus he recognizes not only the Sabbath, but the law of the Sabbath, in the New Testament.

When predicting the overthrow of Jerusalem, which occurred thirty-nine years after his resurrection, he said to his disciples, "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day." Matt. 24:20. Here he points them forward thirty-nine years into the gospel age. He tells them that they will have to flee for their lives, but commands them to pray the Lord that they may not be compelled to flee either in the winter or on the Sabbath day. If they should go in the winter, they might per-

ish. But why not flee upon the Sabbath day? If it was not a sacred day, they could flee on that day as well as on any other. This text, then, plainly shows that not only was the Sabbath to exist so many years after the resurrection of Christ, but that it was still to be regarded as a holy day. If not, there would be no reason in this command. Here, then, we find a New-Testament command from the lips of Jesus himself for the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath.

Sunday-keepers assert that the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath, or the Sabbath of the New Testament. Seventh-day Adventists maintain that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the New Testament. Go into a church on the first day of the week, and you hear the minister call it the Sabbath day. Go among the Seventh-day people on Saturday, and they call that the Sabbath. Now, who is right? We appeal to the New Testament.

"In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene," etc. Matt. 28 : 1. Notice particularly; here are two days. One is the Sabbath day. "In the end of *the Sabbath.*" Very well, there is one day, then, that is the Sabbath. Now which day is this? Sunday-keepers say it is the first day of the week, and we say that it is the seventh day. Read further. "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn *toward the first day of the week.*" Reader, which is the Sabbath day? It cannot be the first day, because the one which is called the Sabbath is the day before the first day. The Sabbath is ended before the first day comes. Remember this is not the testimony of the Old Testament. It is from the gospel that we are reading, the Christian Scriptures, the New Testament; and hence, if you please, the Sabbath here mentioned is the "Christian Sabbath."

Here is another text: "When the Sabbath was past . . . . very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher." Mark 16 : 1, 2. Notice carefully; here are two days spoken of again. One of them is the Sabbath. Which day is it? Is it the first

day? Surely not, because the Sabbath is past before the first day comes. "When the Sabbath was past . . . . the first day of the week they came unto the sepulcher." Remember this is New Testament, not Old,—gospel, not law,—Christian, not Jewish, testimony. To this we appeal. Which day is the Christian Sabbath? This was written a long time after the resurrection, written by a Christian, and for Christians. Reader which is the Christian Sabbath?

Once more. "And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment." Luke 23 : 56. Thus did the holy women who had followed Christ all his life and were acquainted with all his teaching. This was written thirty years after the resurrection. It is in the Christian Scriptures. What does it say? They kept the Sabbath day. What Sabbath day? "The Sabbath day according to the commandment." Then it is the right Sabbath, the one the law requires. Now what day was this? The next verse will settle it. "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher." Notice, the next day after the day they had kept, was the first day of the week. Thus, reader, the first day of the week cannot be the Sabbath day according to the commandment, because the Christians had kept the Sabbath day, the day before the first day of the week. Do not think we are reading from the Old Testament. No, indeed; this is New-Testament Scripture.

We turn to Acts, which was written some thirty-three years this side the commencement of the gospel age, and written by a Christian. It shows us the language of the apostolic Christians touching the ancient Sabbath, and how they used it. We find them always calling it "the Sabbath," just as it had been called in the old dispensation, and using it for religious worship as of old. Of Paul and Barnabas it says: "They came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down." Chap. 13 : 14. This was the seventh day, the day on which the Jews worshiped. Inspiration here calls it *the*

Sabbath day, not *a* Sabbath day, nor the old Sabbath day, nor the Jewish Sabbath day, nor the day that used to be the Sabbath, but "*the* Sabbath day." Was it *the* Sabbath day? Sunday-keepers say, No. The Lord says, Yes.

Paul, in his sermon referring to that day, says that the prophets "are read every Sabbath day." Verse 27. Here the apostle calls it definitely "the Sabbath day." When he had finished his discourse, "the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath." Verse 42. Here, even the Gentiles called it the Sabbath. Once more: "And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together." Verse 44. Luke, the historian, here calls it the Sabbath, and records the meetings they held upon it. James, in Acts 15:21, says the Scriptures are "read in the synagogues every Sabbath day." Thus, James still designates that as the Sabbath day.

Once more: "And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river-side, where prayer was wont to be made." Acts 16:13. On what day? The Sabbath. Who will contradict the Scriptures and say that it was not the Sabbath? Every one holds that the day here referred to was the seventh day; and this record is in the New Testament. This day, then, is the "Christian Sabbath."

Again: "Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures." Acts 17:2. It was Paul's custom to observe the Sabbath, as we here see. On what days did he preach there? On the *Sabbath days*. But this was on the seventh day, not on the first. Which, then, is the Sabbath day, according to Paul? In Acts 18:1–11, we find the following facts: Paul went to Corinth, searched the city over, and found Aquila, a Jew, with whom he went into company in the business of tent-making. Why was he so particular to find a Jew? Evidently because the Jews observed the same day that the apostle did. "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath." Verse 4. "And he continued there a year and six months." Verse 11. Thus we find Paul working at his trade with a Jew and

preaching in the synagogue every Sabbath for a year and a half. Here is a record of seventy-eight Sabbaths observed by the apostle. Not a word is said about keeping Sunday. Thus we find that the seventh day is always and invariably termed "*the* Sabbath" in the New Testament, while the first day is never so called.

Again: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Rev. 1:10. There is, then, in the gospel, a day which belongs to the Lord. That this is the seventh day, is expressly taught all through the Bible. Six days God gave to men, but the seventh day he reserved for his own worship. Hence he says, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord." Ex. 20:10; and he calls it, "My holy day." Isa. 58:13. And Jesus says that he is "Lord of the Sabbath." Mark 2:28. Then the seventh day is the Lord's day. Those who assume that the first day is the Lord's day contradict the Bible, and make it up out of their own hearts.

Here we think we have plainly found the "Christian Sabbath;" that is, the Sabbath day which the Christian Scriptures plainly teach. We ask, then, By what authority do you apply the term "*Sabbath*" to the first day of the week? God has never changed it, and why should you?

In conclusion we ask, Where did the Lord ever give you permission to work on his holy day? Who gave you liberty to use it for secular work? When was the blessing or sanctification removed from it? Where do you find in the New Testament that a Christian ever worked on the seventh day? We pray you to consider these things in the light of the Judgment.

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